

Message Text

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, IN, US

SUBJ: COVERAGE OF POSTPONEMENT OF AID NEGOTIATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 2563

SUMMARY: THE GOI AND THE INDIAN PRESS HAVE REMAINED STRANGELY SILENT ON REPORTS AND COMMENTS CONCERNING THE POSTPONEMENT OF TALKS ON US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIA. WHETHER BY DESIGN OR BY MISTAKE, THE STORY HAS HOWEVER APPEARED IN VARIOUS ENGLISH AND LOCAL-LOLANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS AND THE PATRIOT OVER THE WEEK-END HAS COME CLOSEST TO ACTUALLY BREAKING IT. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH THE STORY ON POSTPONEMENT OF AID TALKS WITH INDIA IS FIVE-DAY OLD, IT HAS NOT BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS AND THE GOI SPOKESMAN REMAINS SILENT.

2. THE FEB 22 PATRIOT WITH, "US AID WITH STRINGS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE REJECTED," HAS COME CLOSEST TO BREAKING THE STORY.

IT FRONT-PAGED A REPORT THAT INDIA'S DRIVE "FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND REDUCING NET FOREIGN AID TO THE MINIMUM WILL BE INTENSIFIED IN THE COMING FINANCIAL YEAR" BECAUSE OF THE NON-RESUMPTION OF INDO-US AID TALKS. "RECENT POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS BY US ADMINISTRATION LEADERS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL NOT HELP ECONOMICALLY ANY COUNTRY WHICH DOES NOT SUPPORT US POLICY." IT NOTED THAT US AID IS "TOKEN" AND WILL BE GIVEN WITH "STRINGS." IT ALSO INCLUDED THE COMMENT THAT DESPITE "ZERO AID" FROM WASHINGTON SINCE 1971, THE INDIAN ECONOMY "HAS NOT SUFFERED UNDUE STRAIN."

3. ELSEWHERE IN THE LANGUAGE PRESS THIS NEWS PERCOLATED AND GOT MOSTLY BRIEF REFERENCES AND OBSERVERS QUESTION WHETHER THESE WERE BY DESIGN OR BY MISTAKE. THE HINDI NAVBHARAT TIMES, BELONGING TO THE TIMES OF INDIA GROUP, CARRIED IT FEB 19 AS A LEAD STORY, EMANATING FROM THE NAVBHARAT TIMES NEWS AGENCY, WHICH MEANS IT IS ASHUORED BY WASHINGTON-BASED CORRESPONDENT M.V. KAMATH. THE SAME DAY, BOMBAY'S GUJARATI EVENING PAPER JANMABHOOMI RAN IT, ATTRIBUTING THE REPBAT TO THE NEW SAMACHAR NEWS AGENCY.

4. TWO ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILIES HAVE CARRIED THE STORY. PATNA'S INDEPENDENT SEARCHLIGHT ON THE 19TH FRONT-PAGED AN AP STORY "INDO-US AID TALKS POSTPONED." THE PRO-LEFT DECCAN HERALD OF BANGALORE, RAN OBSERVATIONS BY NEW YORK-BASED J.K. BANERJI, WHO MAINTAINS THAT BY BREAKING OFF THE AID TALKS, "THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN INDO-US RELATIONS BACK TO THE LOW POINT IT REACHED DURING THE 1971 WAR BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN." SAXBE

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